/66 cont./

142. Upon dealing with this subject, we have accidently had come to mind the story of that first fratricide, who was not satisfied with the promise of God that he would not die a perfidious death and thus lived an errant and fugitive life on earth, persecuted by the voice of blood.

And although we said at the beginning that the Indians are thoroughly imbued with the concept of Kanaima, it is hoped that little by little they will be abandoning it, since if they were at one time perfidious and bloody in their vengeance, now we have redeemed them from their barbarism, they have the right to enjoy that peace promised to men of good will.

143. To convince the Indians, and those who may read this, of the ideas here expounded, we are going to relate a few facts that we know with certainty.

797 a) On a certain occasion a missionary, who was inspecting
123 their agriculture, thinking exactly about this matter of the
776 Kanaima, tried to imitate the whistle that the Indians attribute
781 to him, with such success and with such bad luck that an Indian who happened to have gone to get water, dropping the camaza, took off running like a buck, and crying in a loud voice got into the hammock shaking with fever.

123 b) Some travelers, camped near the Kamá waterfall and
776 who were accompanied by Indians, out of idleness got the idea
781 of shouting "Kanaima, Kanaima," and then, however hard they tried to persuade the Indians that it had been a joke, it was not possible to do so, since the Indians swore that they had seen him and they spent the rest of the night in painful vigil. /67/

159 c) A few years ago there in Akurimá lived two Indians,
776 called Joaquín and Alberto; the first, who had a very bad pre-
●578 vious history, since with other companions he had killed three civilized persons while they were sleeping, wanted to wreak vengeance on the second, with whom he had had a strong altercation. For this purpose he put on the clothing in which his mother had given birth to him, painted himself up well with annatto and other cosmetics, and in this strange form presented

/67 cont./

159 himself in the field. But this time playing Kanaima did not
776 serve him any purpose, since his companion recognized him
578 and, far from being frightened, fell upon him with blows of a stick, so that, going for wool, he came back fleeced and, with his back redder than annatto, ran off to hid his sad fate.

538 144. The Indians themselves, for whom it is easier to let
776 the imagination run to create a tale than to tie together the ends of various facts and ideas to form a well-reasoned out argument, have in their folklore this extremely significant story:

In a certain place there lived two Indians, each one married to the other's sister. During the night they heard Kanaima's whistle, who, or so it seemed, was going around the house with the intention of catching someone. One of the women with the greatest secrecy got down from the hammock and began to spin cotton. The Kanaima whistled again: Soé, soé. The Indian woman opened the door as though to throw out the seeds, and she saw the Kanaima hiding behind a tree. Then speaking in a loud voice in order to cover her intention, she said to her husband: Here is a rat which is eating up my cotton seeds, come shoot it with an arrow. Her husband leaped out of the hammock, picked up his bow, and approached his wife; she said in his ear: The Kanaima is there behind that pole, shoot it. The Kanaima was watching, fooled, to see what would come of that scene, when all of a sudden he received a blow with an arrow on his forehead. Protected by the darkness of the night, he went running to his rancho; to hide what had happened he told his mother that he was shooting at a toucan and that the arrow had come back and wounded him on the forehead.

When day came the Indian woman went to her mother's house and found her brother sick; her mother explained to her that in trying to shoot a toucan he had wounded himself. She returned to her house and told this to her husband. He suspected

/88 cont./
621 from epú, "handle, holder." It is very possible that in sporadic
622 cases, for example when afraid of being attacked, when a stranger approaches, when setting off on a long journey, etc., there may have come forth or may come forth a leader, one less corwardly, more intelligent, etc., but, the danger passed, the external circumstance, they return to their own way of life, in which there are no juridical ties beyond the strictly family ones.

592 192. It is true that the active, friendly hospitable, etc.,
621 Indian with initiative is likeable and that there customarily
622 gather about him several other families, either in individual houses or even in large communal houses, but even then divided up into hearths or fireplaces with all of the culinary utensils, fishing and hunting equipment, etc., the property of each family. Thus not even in this case does the agglutinator-individual have authority over the others, but only a greater or lesser degree of persuasion for adjusting disputes and arguments.

628 From settlement to settlement the same phenomenon
571 occurs; the only tie is the bond of relationship and of friendship, a tie which weakens with distance until in the far distance it becomes distrust and suspicion, never gratuitous aggression.

571 193. Mutual fear does not usually interfere much in the
● 578 group, since in such a case they rather seek peace /two plates appear here/ /89/ by putting land between them. And these Indians can surely say better even than Castillians: "Broad is my land!" In this same sense unsociable Indians or those who are fond of solitude and of avoiding womanly scoldings
[123] isolate themselves or go off to a convenient distance. This was the reason that they continually put foreward to me when I invited them to gather together more: "Separated we do not fight and occasional visits are more pleasant and welcome."

127 It is for this reason that a careful census of this whole
162 region carried out in the years 1940 and 1942, which included

592 621 permission of the family head, be accepted into such a family group. Such persons are not adopted in any formal way, nor are they considered to be relatives if they are not so by blood or marriage, but they are, on sufferance, integral members of the household and subject to its habits and discipline.

592 622 Such a group always has a single head, who is an adult, married, able-bodied man. He is not necessarily the oldest man in the group, but acquires his status by natural force of character, by being the first to settle at that particular spot, or the like. There is no formal election or selection of such a group-leader, who is called toʾ-esaʾ, but we could not learn that any misunderstandings, friction, or defiance had ever resulted from the informality of the [621] system. If another male member of the group is dissatisfied with his subordinate position, he is free at any time to move away and start his own group as its toʾ-esaʾ, and this occasionally happens.

The authority of such a headman or local group-leader is almost exactly analogous in form and substance to that of the male head of a family in most [578] European societies. The family spirit is friendly and co-operative, seldom involving any friction or discipline, and in general the status of the toʾ-esaʾ is only that of a leader among equals. His opinion is the most valued and he is looked to for decisions and leadership in matters involving the family group as [183] a whole. He is responsible for seeing that necessities are provided, and if need be toward this end he orders the labors of the others, but in general their duties are so well understood and so willingly undertaken by all that an "order" in any stringent sense is hardly necessary.

631 643 It is evident that many Indians of the region recognize or are aware of no authority beyond the very local one of their respective toʾ-esaʾ. Within the central group there is, however, a chief who is formally recognized as such by all the local households and who exercises a general supervision over the tribal 643 group superior to the local autonomy of the toʾ-esaʾ. This official is called teburu (or tepuru), which may be rendered as cacique (or perhaps more nearly in accord with coloquial Venezuelan, "capitán," although from a broader point [191] of view "cacique" is a better word). At present the cacique of the tribe is Alejo Calcaño, a full-blooded member of the tribe although he is one of the two or three who speak Spanish and who have spent some time in Venezuelan towns.

The authority of the cacique over the various different households is almost exactly analogous to that of a toʾ-esaʾ over the members of a single household. It rests on prestige, custom, and consent rather than on force or on any formulated legal basis or religious theory. His office is not hereditary in principle, although sometimes so in fact, and rests on no supernatural designation, ordeal, or other mode of selection beyond informal consent. Tenure is for life and on the death of a cacique a new one is chosen by discussion and agreement, without any set form of election or anything resembling a tribal parliament.

273 a large number of guests, allowing several days for preparations and assembling.
574 Once under way, the party lasts without intermission, day and night,[177] until the drink is exhausted. This usually means two or three days and sometimes means a week or ten days. Men, women, and children assemble and participate on an equal footing, although the children and some of the women remain relatively sober. The drinks, pleasant in moderation, are nauseating in large quantities and it is common for participants to stagger out between rounds, vomit, and return to the fray. Drinkers who become unconscious are dumped somewhere on the ground or in a hammock, while the supply lasts, to recover.
[578] These herculean drinking bouts are thus unattractive to a sober observer, but seem seldom to give rise to the seriously disorderly conduct or fighting that would be expected in a bout of equal proportions among more "civilized" people, or such as are reported by travelers among other tribes.

[535] A long, social drinking party of this sort is almost invariably accompanied by dancing, also purely social in purpose and practically continuous as long as anyone can stand up to dance.

Dances.

535 There are about a dozen special dances. Some of these are reserved for special occasions, but a long drinking and dancing party involves the performance of at least two and usually several in sequence and alternation.

[171] The most common dance is the parichara, which is danced with variation all over this part of South America, even among some non-Carib tribes. It can
[534] be danced at any time, night or day, and is accompanied by drums and trumpets (kamai) and by singing, but not by flageolets. Some or all of the men wear a special costume, the parichara-pon, consisting of a diadem, aro[a], and a skirt, imaripadai, of maripada palm leaves. As we saw it danced, only the cacique, who directed the dance and led the singing and music, wore the aro[a] but most of the males wore the imaripadai. Women also participate and wear no fixed costume but usually adorn themselves with woven cotton circlets on the hair from which streamers with tufts of down and other decorations fall down the back. Each person dances individually but a man's wife or wives usually accompany him and the sexes are not segregated or specialized in pattern, although the
[533] men provide all the music. The musicians likewise dance and are not set apart as an orchestra.

The dance is monotonous to the observer, continuing indefinitely with no noteworthy variations, with a simple succession of long and short beats. On the long beat a stiff-legged step is taken, usually but not invariably with the right leg, and on the short beat a quicker, springing step is taken on the other foot. The body swings forward and backward in rhythm, flinging up the palm-leaf skirts of the men in a manner suggestive of the Polynesian hula or of what is

177 [see footnote on p. 329, category 116 – Analysis]

Swimming.

526 The men and, particularly, the boys are very fond of swimming and [481] spend hours in the water. They paddle and splash around hilariously. It is pe- [147] culiar that when seriously attempting to go anywhere in the water, they swim below the surface, staying under as long as a minute and crossing any of the streams in Kamarata (up to perhaps twenty meters) without coming up for breath. The stroke is a rather formless but effective paddle. They tread water and remain at the surface in deep pools with ease, but I never saw them progress on the surface for more than one or two strokes. This is pure conjecture and not entirely probable, but it almost seems that they have learned swimming by imitating fishes and that it has not occurred to them that they might swim and breathe air at the same time.

Drunkenness.

273 Their herculean drinking bouts have been mentioned in connection with the dances that usually accompany them. Their alcoholic drinks are weak enough to require considerable perseverance in order to become drunken, but at these long parties most adults, men and women, do eventually achieve this [514] condition. Such a party becomes disgusting, from any sober point of view, particularly as vomiting is an expected interlude between rounds, but at the one ● [578] bout that I attended it did not become seriously disorderly. It is the highest tribute to Kamarakoto character that even with the whole crowd irresponsibly alcoholic, there was no quarreling, no abusive or even particularly noisy language, and that as much courtesy and thoughtfulness persisted as was at all con- [857] sistent with their condition. Children of all sizes attended and were not neglected but had an equally hilarious time without drinking.[228]

[152] Such excesses have their aftermath and the only time that I saw the Kamarakotos surly and cheerless was the day after a week of carousing, when all were suffering severely and had lost interest in life or the neighbors.

Incendiarism.

157 A curious practice not mentioned in previous pages is that of setting fires 372 in the dry season. The dry grass of the sabanas then becomes highly inflamma- 311 ble and the Indians delight in firing it, just to see it burn. Some tribes do this, ostensibly at least, to drive out animals when hunting or as a means of signaling,[229] but the Kamarakotos have, and give, no other reason than they enjoy 372 setting and watching the fires. Flying over the country in this season, rings of 311 fire can often be seen on every patch of sabana and after a party from the Caroni left us we could see columns of smoke in that direction for two days. The forest

228, 229 [see footnotes on p. 333, category 116 - Analyst]